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# MEDIA TECHNIQUES FOR THE READING TEACHER

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The McLuhan age posed a special problem for teachers of reading. Realizing the power of non-print as an educational tool, they have had to search for the best ways to use media to strengthen, not detract from, the developing literacy of their students. Often this difficulty, as well as the expense of materials or the poor quality of available software have turned the "media revolution" into something less than a skirmish in many classrooms and schools.

The following are a few suggestions for using films to strengthen comprehension skills in the classroom. They can be used with any narrative film, even the "art-free" type common to many school libraries, or those of the "content-free" variety provided free of cost by advertisers. (A bibliography of film sources follows the examples).

1. For creation of experience stories:
  - a. Project a film, or segment of a film, without the sound. Have the students compose dialogue where appropriate as well as narration. Compare their texts with the original which can form the basis for discussion.
  - b. Same as *a* above, but use the student scripts as a basis for dramatic readings to be taped and played back with the soundless film. Emphasize expressive reading, inflection, stress, observing punctuation, etc.
  - c. Show the middle of a film and have students write and tape the beginning and end.
2. For practice of recall and sequencing: Show a segment of a film with an easily discernible sequence. Turn off the projector and have the students try to list the events and their order. Replay that part of the film to check.
3. Inferring cause-effect, effect-cause: Project the part of a film which shows a causal situation. Shut off the projector and have the students predict the outcome. Continue the film to check. This can be reversed to infer causes.
4. Inferring character traits: Project a film with rather clear-cut characterizations. Before a decisive action, stop the projector and predict how the various characters will act. Project to check and discuss differences of interpretation.
5. For a discussion of propaganda: Use films provided by commercial companies. Show the film without introduction. Following the film, discuss the ways in which they became aware of the product. Reshow

part of the film after presenting classical persuasive techniques, such as bandwagon and testimonial, which are ubiquitous in such films.

6. For study skills:

- a. Research: Have students preview a travelogue-type film, then use research sources to prepare their own narration. Show the film with their narration, using the freeze-frame to accommodate the revised version.
- b. Outlining and summarizing: Have the students create a "story board" for a segment of the film. They sketch out the major scenes and write the script beneath each sketch. Compare story boards to the original for inclusion of essential elements, sequence and subordination.

Other general techniques for use of films include: projecting a sequence backwards and stopping the projector before the causal situation—especially good for science films which can usually be found to correlate with written texts; playing a demonstration film without the sound and having the students produce the directions; thoughtful use of the stop buttons and freeze-frames can provide grist for the prediction procedure which psycholinguists have emphasized as crucial for the development of fluid reading.

The use of such techniques with film before initiating similar activities with print media can provide the task framework for the student much more effectively than verbal preparation alone. By using media intelligently, the classroom reading teacher can provide practice activities for higher order comprehension tasks.

*SOURCES FOR FREE-LOAN FILMS:* Send for catalogues to:

1. Association-Sterling Films, 866 Third Avenue, NY, NY 10022
2. Shell Film Library, 450 N. Meridian Street, Indianapolis, Ind. 46204
3. Modern Talking Picture Service, 2323 New Hyde Park Rd., New Hyde Park, NY 11040
4. Aetna Life and Casualty, Hartford, Conn. 06115
5. Miller Brewing Co., Film Section, 4000 W. State St., Milwaukee, Wis. 53208